



News Release

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State issues “fish consumption advisory” for the lower Okanogan River

High levels of DDT and PCBs in carp prompt health warning

OLYMPIA — A study of fish from the Okanogan River has led the state Department of Health to issue a fish consumption advisory for carp from the lower part of the river. [The advisory](#) is in effect from the Malott Bridge south to the Columbia River and Brewster Bridge, and east to the southeast corner of Chief Joseph State Park.

State health officials advise people who fish the lower Okanogan River to limit carp to one meal per month. This is especially important for young children and women who are or who may one day become pregnant. The Hispanic community in the area may eat more fish, including carp, from the river than others, and Spanish translations are included in public outreach activities.

“While fish are an important part of a healthy diet, the carp in this stretch of the river contain enough contaminants that they should be eaten only occasionally,” said State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes. “Because these particular contaminants are unhealthy for young children and women who are or may become pregnant, we urge them to follow the once-a-month recommendation, and to find other fish and sources of protein to round out a healthy diet.”

Because fish is a low-fat food, a great source of protein, vitamins, minerals, and omega 3 fatty acids, the agency promotes fish as part of a healthy diet that includes two meals of fish per week.

Although both DDT and PCBs have been banned since the 1970’s, long-lasting pollutants from past agricultural, commercial, and industrial practices have caused contamination in many of Washington’s waters.

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